

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

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FOLLOWING REPEAT ALGIERS 1236 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 14 MAY

QTE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: BAGB BEXP AG

SUBJ: ALGERIAN PROPOSAL FOR COOPERATION WITH US AGRICULTURAL
BUSINESS FIRMS IN DEVELOPING DRY LAND AREAS

REF: (A) ALGIERS 1212; (B) STATE 6578

1. A DEPT OF COMMERCE SPONSORED TECHNICAL SALES SEMINAR
ON AGRICULTURAL LAND DEVELOPMENT WAS HELD IN ALGIERS
ON MAY 7. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SEMINAR WAS US ASSISTANT
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE ROBERT W. LONG.

2. SEMINAR SESSIONS WERE LARGELY CONCERNED WITH
MODERN TECHNIQUES OF DRY LAND DEVELOPMENT. ALGERIAN
SECRETARY GENERAL OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE BOUKLI
ATTENDED SESSIONS AND, APPARENTLY QUITE IMPRESSED,
MADE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY LONG.

3. BOUKLI PROPOSED THAT ALGERIA CONTRACT WITH ONE OR
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MORE CONSORTIUMS OF SEPCIALIZED US AGRI-BUSINESS FIRMS

FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF TWO PILOT PROJECTS IN ALGERIA. ONE WOULD BE A 20,000 HECTARE/AREA IN THE SAHARA AND THE SECOND WOULD BE A TWO MILLION HECTARE AREA IN THE STEPPE.

4. BOUKLI WOULD HOPE THAT THESE PROJECTS COULD INCLUDE RESEARCH STUDIES, WATER SEARCHES, LAND PREPARATION, IRRIGATION PROJECTS. AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE, TRAINING PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING ROADS, TOWNS, ETC.

5. BOUKLI STRESSED HE WAS NOT ASKING FOR AN AID PROGRAM OR US GOVERNMENT GRANT. GOA WOULD PAY FULL PRICE BUT WOULD HOPE FOR FINANCING TO HELP THEM PAY FOR PROJECT. THESE TWO PROJECTS COULD "CREATE A SHOWCASE OF US AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY AS APPLIED TO AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD", AND COULD LEAD TO OTHER FOLLOWON PROJECTS IN AFRICA.

6. BOUKLI WILL SEND A LETTER OF INTENT WITH MORE DETAILS OF HIS PROPOSALS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND HOPES FOR A POSITIVE US REPLY. HE ENVISAGES AN EVENTUAL PROTOCOL AGREEMENT TO STATE ALGERIAN AND US OFFICIAL INTENTIONS TO PROMOTE THESE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. CONTRACTS WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE SIGNED BY GOA WITH CONSORTIUMS OF US FIRMS.

7. ASSISTANT SECRETARY LONG INDICATED DEPT OF AGRICULTURE INTEREST IN SUCH A PLAN AND SAID LETTER OF INTENT WOULD BE STUDIED CAREFULLY IN WASHINGTON TO SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE. MR. LONG SAID THAT EXISTING PROGRAMS IN USDA MIGHT COVER SENDING OF EVALUATION TEAM OF SPECIALISTS TO ALGERIA TO LOOK INTO GOA NEEDS AND EVALUATE POSSIBILITY OF LONG-RANGE US COMMERCIAL AGRI-BUSINESS INPUT INTO ALGERIAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS. WE PRESUME TRAVEL OF SUCH A TEAM COULD BE FINANCED UNDER AID REIMBURSABLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL DISCUSSED WITH ALGERIANS IN JANUARY (REFTEL (B)).

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8. EMBASSY COMMENT: US FIRMS PARTICIPATING IN SEMINAR WERE OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH POSSIBILITY OF ENORMOUS FUTURE BUSINESS IN ALGERIS. SUCH PROJECTS PROBABLY WOULD RUN INTO HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. BOUKLI SEEMED TO BE MAKING PROPOSAL SPONTANEOUSLY, THUS SERIOUSNESS REMAINS TO BE PROVED. IF LETTER OF INTENT IS RECEIVED WE CAN BETTER TELL WHAT ALGERIANS REALLY HAVE IN MIND.

FINANCING WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND OBVIOUSLY IN KEY
ELEMENT. NEVERTHELESS, IN TERMS OF ALGERIA'S
DEVELOPMENT SUCH US INPUT WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE
AND IF SUCCESSFUL COULD WELL BECOME A MODEL OF US
AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION WITH THIRD WORLD. PARKER UNQTE
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